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THE MEDIAEVAL HISTORY OF THE DOUBLE-AXE MOTIF

THE double-headed axe is so ancient and well known a motif in ornament that it scarcely requires description or explanation in its original form. About the beginning of the Christian era, however, it begins to take on elaborated forms which gradually evolve a pattern whose further evolution can be traced uninterruptedly into the thirteenth century. This evolution it is the purpose of my paper to trace.

I. MOSAICS

It is quite apparent, from the advanced form of the double-axe in our first example (Fig. 1), a mosaic of Salzburg of the early first century A.D., that the motif has a long history behind it, leading back perhaps to lotiform patterns in Egyptian ornament, which it is not in the province of this paper to trace. The significant feature of the Salzburg mosaic, in view of the later development of the double-axe, is the isolation of the motif, but we also note that the concave sides of the axe are filled with design, so that they give the effect of half-axes placed in a perpendicular sense to the principal double-axe head.

This handling of course suggests an all-over pattern, and we have in fact such an application of the motif in a beautiful mosaic pavement in the Baths on the Cladeos at Olympia (Fig. 1), dating in the time of Nero. It may be noted that the small arrow-like points which were used in the Salzburg mosaic are lacking in the Olympia example.

The greater flexibility of the pattern thus afforded by the complementary treatment of the concave sides is also shown by an example of the second century found in a mosaic of the Baths of Pompeianus at Oued-Athmenia in Numidia.¹ The isolated motif of Salzburg is now strung out in a continuous border which is capable of turning the numerous corners required by the design

¹ Daremberg and Saglio, *Dict. des Ant. grecques et romaines*, VI, fig. 5246.

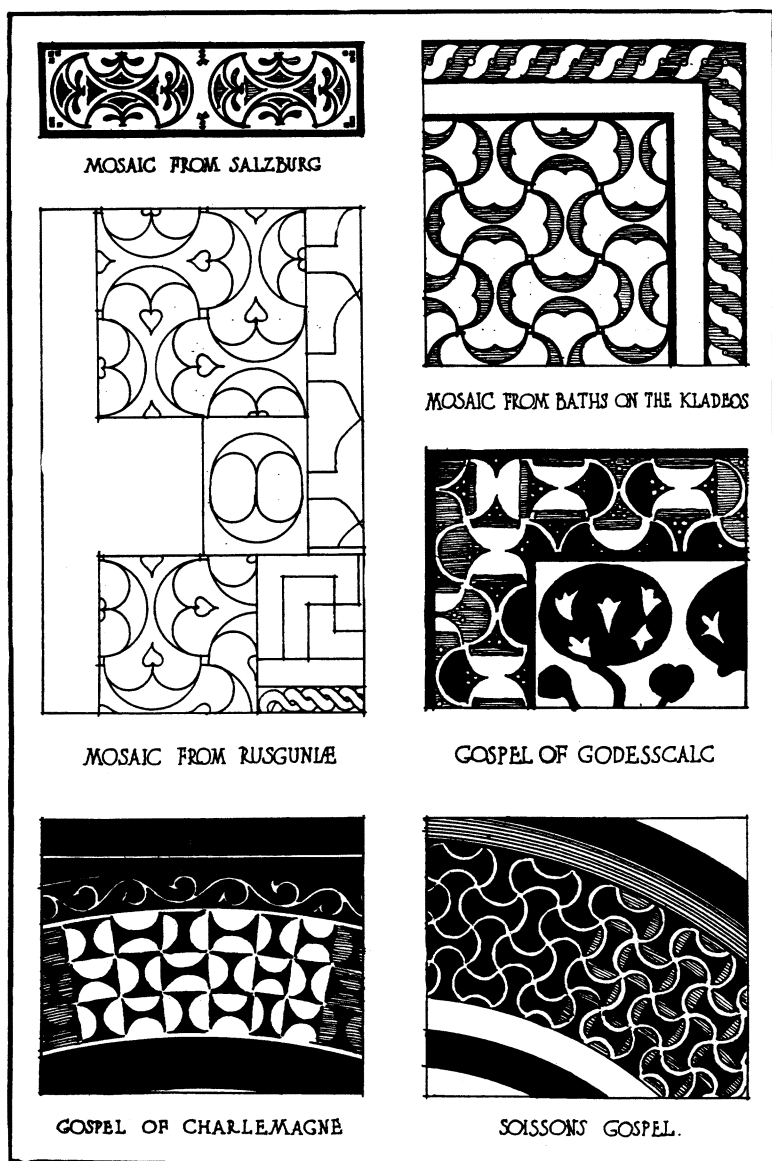


FIGURE 1.—THE DOUBLE-AXE ORNAMENT IN MOSAICS AND ILLUMINATIONS.

by reason of the perpendicular axis already established in the decoration of the concave faces. The all-over pattern of Olympia, again, reappears in a third-century Roman mosaic at Puig

de Cebolla in Spain,¹ but here the decline of naturalistic ornament is striking, for the motif is handled in a hard and geometric manner, and all understanding of the original form is lost. It is only by comparison with the example from Olympia that we can discover the connection of the Spanish pattern with the original double-axe.

There has been found in Africa, at ancient Rusguniae near Algiers, a well-preserved mosaic, dated through epigraphical peculiarities about 400 A.D., which again affords a fine example of our motif (Fig.

1). The double-axe is here used in a border that varies slightly in width, but the facility of the handling gives one an impression of consistency in spite of this, as well as a feeling that the mosaicists were beginning to canvass the possibility of laying out the design in squares in order to simplify its execution. Proof of this is afforded directly by an important example



FIGURE 2.—MOSAIC AT SORDE.

at Sorde in the southwestern corner of France (Fig. 2). The design of this mosaic is in fact laid out in squares which govern the application of the pattern; the motif carries with it the souvenir of its early form in the arrow-points or tiny ivy-leaves which decorated the lateral concavities in our first example at Salzburg, but their meaning has now been lost in a mere space-filling design. The mosaic aroused some discussion at the French *Congrès Archéo-*

¹ L. Puig y Cadafalch, *L'Arquitectura romànica a Catalunya*, I, fig. 285.

logique of 1888, and produced a division of opinion, some maintaining that the pavement was Gallo-Roman while others assigned it to the twelfth century. The earlier date is indicated with certainty by the appearance of the arrow-points or leaves which in the later history of the motif are reduced to mere dots, usually three in number, and the question has recently been decided in favor of the Gallo-Roman date by the discovery of substantially the same pattern as that of the Sorde mosaic in a fourth century pavement of St. Sophia at Sofia in Bulgaria.¹

These examples by no means exhaust the list of specimens found in Roman art, early and late, but the others² all show the original isolation of the motif and are thus not related to the development of the motif which started with its use as an all-over pattern. Like most of the threads that bind antiquity to the Middle Ages, this one also is interrupted by the "dark ages," and we find that the history of the motif in recognizable form must be resumed in the Carolingian period. But one monument shows that the pattern was not forgotten even in that barest of centuries as regards artistic creation,—the seventh. In the pediment of the ancient structure which now forms the transepts of the Baptistery of Saint-Jean at Poitiers³ we find the double-axe used as a frieze, placed there in the reconstruction of the seventh century when the walls of the baptistery were raised. The peculiarity of this example resides in the fact that the squares which we saw at Sorde are here all turned in the same sense, so that we really lose the last connection with the original double-axe of the isolated variety; the Merovingian decorator did not understand the origin of the pattern and made merely a geometrical copy of the lateral half-axes. The connection with Gallo-Roman examples like that of Sorde is indicated by the carefully cut notches which correspond to the concavities of the under side of the axe-heads in the mosaic.

II. ILLUMINATED MANUSCRIPTS

We resume the tracing of the history of our pattern at the end of the eighth century with its use in the Gospels of Godescale, and

¹ *Jb. Arch.* I. 1912, p. 562, fig. 3.

² *Baudenkmäler von Olympia*, II, pl. CX; *Antike Denkmäler*, I, pl. 47; *L'Architecture romànica a Catalunya*, I, figs. 281, 286, 342; Riegl, *Spätrömische Kunstindustrie*, pl. XV, 6.

³ De la Mauvinière, *Poitiers et Angoulême*, p. 12.

it is a noteworthy fact that for the next three centuries it seems to be found in manuscripts alone. The ivory-workers never use it, and no examples may be found in gold-work, nor in the scanty remains of architectural ornament which have been left us by the Carolingian and Ottonian epochs. But starting with the use of the motif by Godescalc we enter upon an evolution that is continuous and consistent in the decoration of manuscripts until the motif emerges in the architectural sculpture of the Romanesque schools.

The Gospels written by Godescalc (Paris, Bibliothèque Nationale, *nouv. acq. lat.* 1203) are dated by Leprieur¹ shortly after 781. The manuscript is the earliest one of certain date which can be assigned to what is called the "Ada-group," the name being derived from a putative sister of Charlemagne for whom one of the manuscripts in the group was written and illuminated. Godescalc knew our motif and uses it (Fig. 1) in a way much more reminiscent of the late mosaics than is the frieze of Saint-Jean-de-Poitiers. The notches which the Merovingian decorator employed are lacking and their place is taken by shading. But the squares are turned, as in the mosaic of Sorde, in two senses and the arrow-points or ivy-leaves of the original design are indicated by three small dots. These dots are a persistent characteristic of the motif in illumination, continuing, with variation in number, down to the twelfth century.

The next example to be found in the Ada-group occurs in the Psalter of Charlemagne² which Leprieur dates between 772 and 795. The motif is here much the same as in the Godescalc Gospels, but the axe-heads are outlined with a light contour which gives to the design a flowing continuity akin to that of the Olympia mosaic and absent in the pattern used by Godescalc, which is too emphatically squared. Another example is found in the Gospels of Saint-Denis of the same group,³ a manuscript which is to be dated at the end of the eighth century according to Leprieur and Boinet, but is a work of somewhat cruder execution than either of the two preceding works. This inferiority is also displayed in the use of the double-axe ornament, which, though it retains the light contour of Charlemagne's Psalter, shows such hopeless disconnection as to lose all effect of a flowing pattern.

¹ In Michel, *Hist. de l'Art chrét.* I, 1, p. 337.

² Vienna, Imperial Library, 1861; Boinet, *La Miniature carolingienne*, pl. VI.

³ Paris, Bibl. Nat., *MSS. lat.* 9387; Boinet, *op. cit.* pl. V.

In the Gospels of Charlemagne (an Ada-group manuscript in the library at Abbeville), dated by Leprieur¹ and Boinet between 790 and 814, we have for the first time in illumination the use of the motif as a veritable all-over pattern (Fig. 1). From now on it would be more closely descriptive to call the motif the "pin-wheel,"—a name which has for some time been given to the ornament by students of illumination at Princeton,—because it is so handled that from any intersection-point of the design four axe-heads radiate in pin-wheel fashion. The sense of squareness is beginning to be lost in the flow of a continuous pattern.

The continuous handling is even more apparent in the Gospels of Soissons (Ada-group, Paris, Bibl. Nat., *MSS. lat.* 8850), dated by Leprieur and Boinet about 820 (Fig. 1).² Here not only the outline of the axe-heads serves to accentuate the flow of the pattern by their continuous treatment, but the axe-heads themselves are made so slender as to give the impression of ribbons. The Gospels of Lorsch,² on the other hand, are an excellent illustration of the "throw-backs" which the student so often finds in illumination because of the frequent wholesale copying, on the part of a later scribe, of the decoration as well as the text of the earlier manuscript which serves him as model. This manuscript of the middle of the ninth century gives us two examples of the "pin-wheel," one in the inner border of the "Christ in Majesty" and the other in that of the title-page of Matthew. The outside borders of both pages are identical with that of the Matthew-portrait in the Gospels of Soissons, and it is not surprising therefore to find a striking similarity between the "pin-wheel" in the inner border of the "Majesty" and that used in the border of the Matthew-portrait of the Soissons Gospels. On the other hand, the "pin-wheels" of the Matthew title-page in the Lorsch Gospels resemble more closely the motif as we have it in the Psalter of Charlemagne, cited above, and other characteristics of the page show a similar affinity. The Gospels of Lorsch in this, as in many other respects, appear rather as an eclectic summary of the style of the Ada-group of manuscripts than as a step forward in the evolution of our motif.

¹ In Michel: *Hist. de l'Art chrét.*, I, 1, p. 337.

² Gyulafehérvár in Hungary, Batthyány library; Boinet, *op. cit.* pls. XV, XVI. Another "Ada" example of the motif, so poorly reproduced (Doberschütz, *Textkritik der Vulgata*) that I hesitate to classify it, is to be found in the *Codex Ingolstadiensis* (Munich, Bibl. Acad. MS. 29).

Midway between these two types found in the Gospels of Lorsch is an example provided by the Gospels of Bishop Anno of Friesing in South Bavaria (854-875). The double-axe is here (Fig. 3) used for the first time in an all-around border. It is handled with considerable facility for, in spite of turning corners and perhaps the greater difficulty of being confined to two rows of double-axes instead of three, the continuity of the design is pretty well maintained, chiefly through the accentuated outline. It is instructive to compare this example with that of the Passau Gospels, three centuries later (Fig. 5).

Our next example is of value as showing how the motif may serve to indicate the date of a manuscript. It is taken from the Psalter of Corbie,¹ a manuscript dated by Boinet in the early ninth century. This date would appear strange to any student of illumination in view of the high development reached by the figured initial, and certainly it would not be suggested by the form of the "pin-wheel" here used. The handling is crude, but shows two characteristics which point to a date at least a century later than that given the manuscript by Boinet. The first consists of the considerable margin which is allowed to separate the tips of the axe-heads, as is the case only in late examples. In the second place the white contour which we have seen in several earlier examples is here produced by drawn lines; in other words the color handling is giving way to a linear technique which, as we shall see, is a sign of decadence.

From the Ada-group, the "pin-wheel" passes on to the Rhenish school of the Ottonian period which is nowadays somewhat loosely called the "school of Reichenau." A fine example is found in an early manuscript of the school, the Heidelberg Sacra-



FIGURE 3.—ILLUMINATION FROM THE GOSPELS OF ANNO OF FREISING.

¹ Amiens, Bibl. de la Ville, 18; Boinet, *op. cit.* pl. CXLVIII.

mentary (Heidelberg, University Library, Sal. IXb), dated by Janitschek and by Herbert toward the end of the tenth century. The symptom of decadence noted above in the separation of the points of the axe-heads is here apparent (Fig. 4), but the development of the motif is shown in its freer use as an all-over pattern, in which respect it affords the best example to be found in illumination. Rhenish influence on Belgian work is shown by the close affinity between the form of the pin-wheel in the Sacramentary



FIGURE 4.—MINIATURE FROM THE HEIDELBERG SACRAMENTARY.

and in a Belgian manuscript in the Bibliothèque Nationale.¹ The only difference between the two designs lies in the somewhat greater distance left between the tips of the axes, and in the use of but one dot instead of the usual three as a space-filler.

A Rhenish manuscript dated by Vöge about the year 1000, the Aachen "Otto-manuscript,"²

affords evidence of the decline which is fast coming upon our motif in illumination. In one of the canon-pages we see the tendency to thin the axe-heads to a point at which they almost become ribbons, and all the examples of the use of the "pin-wheel" in this manuscript show a pronounced emphasis given to the longitudinal axis. This in time leads to the deterioration of the motif from an all-over pattern to what is practically a series of parallels. This last phase is represented by the

¹ The Sacramentary of Paris, Bibl. Nat., *MSS. lat.* 819; photograph in Princeton Art Museum.

² Beissel: *Die Bilder der Handschrift des Kaisers Otto*, pls. I, XX, XXV, XXVI.

border of the Luke-portrait in the Passau Gospels (Fig. 5) in Munich, dated by Swarzenski about 1150.¹ The example should be compared with the "pin-wheel" of the Gospels of Anno of Freising noted above (Fig. 3). The use of the motif is identical and it is altogether probable that the later manuscript borrowed its border, if not directly from the Bavarian manuscript, at least



FIGURE 5.—ILLUMINATION FROM THE PASSAU GOSPELS: MUNICH.

from an intermediate copy. But the lapse of three centuries is reflected in the tell-tale lengthening of the major axis in the Passau Gospels, a lengthening which has been carried to such an

¹The motif occurs in a dated Hildesheim manuscript of 1011 (Domschatz, No. 33), where the beginning of the isolated treatment of the Passau manuscript is indicated by a breaking down of the all-over pattern and the introduction of a sort of rectangular cabochon in alternate squares. The edges of the axe-heads are but slightly separated, which shows an earlier stage than the example in the Passau gospel. See Josten, *Neue Studien zur Evangelienhandschrift no' 18 im Domschatze zu Hildesheim*, pl. V, A.

extent that turning the corners becomes a difficult task for the illuminator.

The Passau manuscript represents the continuation of the old Reichenau school in German illumination, and thus by right inherits the use of the "pin-wheel" from the older group. Other German manuscripts of the twelfth century also offer examples of



FIGURE 6.—ILLUMINATION IN A MANUSCRIPT OF THE XII CENTURY: TRÈVES.

it, notably one in the treasury of Trèves cathedral (Fig. 6), where we find the motif reduced to a single line of double-axes, as we might expect from the parallelizing tendency above noted. This specimen may be said to close the cycle we have followed, beginning with the Salzburg mosaic of the first century and ending thus in the Romanesque illumination of Germany in the

twelfth. The pattern occurs again in the Perikopenbuch of St. Erentrud at Munich (c. 1150),¹ but in so degenerate a form that the double-axe motif may be said to have vanished.

Two examples of the use of the motif in wall-painting may be briefly cited here. One is probably of the early twelfth century; it is to be found in Catalunya, in the church of Sta. Maria de Bohí.² The pattern here is distinctly squared, and there is no particular scheme to the coloring; the lack of the contour, which was a prevalent characteristic of the motif in illumination, links this Spanish example more closely with the architectural type to be considered shortly than with the manuscripts.

This is less true of the other fresco, at Knechtsteden on the Rhine.³ The motif appears both on the soffit of the triumphal arch of the local church, and in a border at the base of the drum of the apse. The pattern in the former case is a very stiff and geometric rendering of the all-over pattern with the outlined contour common to the examples we have found in the manuscripts. The border of the design in the apse is a very late and decadent form, closely resembling the motif in the Perikopenbuch of St. Erentrud. The church is dated in the twelfth century.

III. ARCHITECTURAL SCULPTURE

A. IN ITALY

The double-axe or "pin-wheel" appears in architectural sculpture in Italy as early as the opening years of the twelfth century, some years before it makes its appearance in France. Guglielmus, so far as we know, was the first sculptor to use the motif, and it appears five times in Modena cathedral on which Guglielmus was working *ca.* 1100. In one of these cases it is used as a torus moulding, a most natural translation into stone of painted borders such as we find in the Heidelberg Sacramentary. This torus is one of the archivolt mouldings of the central western portal of the cathedral,⁴ and the motif is so well handled in this example that one wonders if Guglielmus, or his assistant, did not draw from some earlier sculptured example. The other four specimens at Modena are unique in that the motif is used in each

¹ Swarzenski: *Salzburger Malerei*, pls. L, LVIII.

² *Pintures Murals Catalanes*, publ. by the Institut d'Estudis Catalans, III, pl. XVII.

³ Clemen: *Kunstdenkmäler der Rheinprovinz*, III, 3, figs. 24, 25, and pl. 1.

⁴ Martin: *L'Art roman en Italie*, I, pl. 46, 3.

case to represent water. On the lintel of the right portal of the west façade (Fig. 7) we find a representation of Noah, sailing along in the Ark upon a flood of double-axes. It must be admitted that the rendition of the water is not so bad as one might expect, owing to the Italian method of carving the motif, which differs greatly from that used in France. The French carver made the axe-head into a flap (Fig. 11), while the Italians obtained a peculiar effect by raising the cutting edge of the axe,

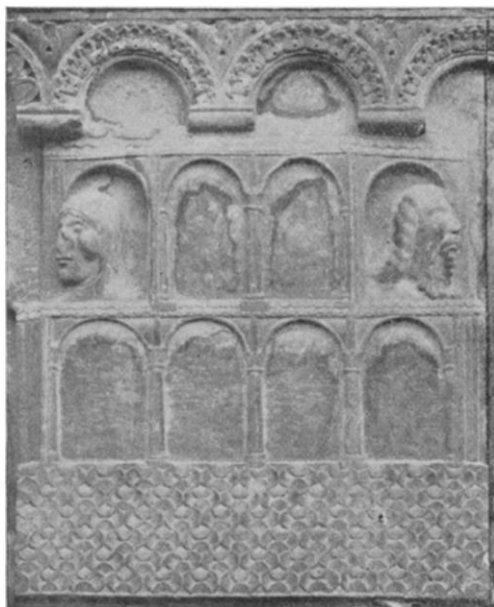


FIGURE 7.—RELIEF OF NOAH BY NICOLÒ:
CATHEDRAL, MODENA.

so to speak, in relief, and by incising the thinner necking, so that each double-axe appears to be pushed inward at its centre. The companion piece to the relief just mentioned, viz., the lintel of the left doorway, presents among other scenes the Creation of Eve.¹ Adam is here depicted asleep beside a pool whose water is again indicated by the double-axe pattern. The other two scenes in which this use of the motif appears occur on the lintel of the south

doorway and on the archivolt of the north portal.² In the latter case the sculptor apparently became confused in his rendition of the design, and the double-axe drifts off into another pattern.

San Silvestro at Nonantola, erected a few years after Modena and close to it in style, displays the motif on one of the archivolt mouldings of the western portal.³ In the cathedrals of Ferrara and Piacenza, the sculptures in which the double-axe appears are

¹ Martin, *op. cit.* pl. 45, 3.

² Martin, *op. cit.* pl. 47, 2, 1.

³ Porter, *Lombard Architecture*, pl. 155, 5.

supposed to be by Guglielmus' pupil Nicolò, and certainly all these cathedrals show a close community of style. At Ferrara, built about 1135, we have two portals with torus mouldings carved with our motif, namely the central portal, and the southern portal of the west façade.¹ The use of the double-axe in the latter case is remarkable in that the blades are further decorated with a bold though simple floral design. Piacenza has the usual sculptured torus over the right portal,² and the double-axe here, as in the other Italian examples throughout two centuries, shows an extraordinary adherence to the first form of the motif as used by Guglielmus.

In the basilica of Pomposa we find a double-axe capital among several bits of sculpture bearing the characteristics of the school of Antellami. The similarity of all the Italian examples of the motif makes it difficult to date this capital with accuracy, but a date about 1170 would fit the group of sculptures to which it belongs and would not be improbable for the capital itself.³ The basilica church of Traù in Dalmatia⁴ affords another example of the motif in a pilaster capital behind the pulpit. It requires no special notice, exhibiting as it does the usual features of the motif as used in Italy. A more interesting example is to be found in the ambo of the church of Sta. Maria in Carpi (Fig. 8), which is dated by Porter in 1184. The figure of a dead saint is here represented in rather low relief upon a background of double axes done in the usual Italian way.



FIGURE 8.—PROPHET IN THE SAGRA:
CARPI.

¹ Martin, *op. cit.* pls. 71, 74.

² Martin, *op. cit.* pl. 31.

³ Errard, *L'Art byzantin*, III, pl. XI.

⁴ Kowalczyk, *Denkmäler der Kunst in Dalmatien*, pl. 105.

Still another example of the motif in Italy may be mentioned, namely the transenna found at S. Agnese at Rome¹ which is decorated with an all-over double-axe pattern. Venturi and Jubarù both date the balustrade in the fourth century, but analysis of the archaeological evidence which induced Armellini, the first to publish the transenna, to assign it to this early

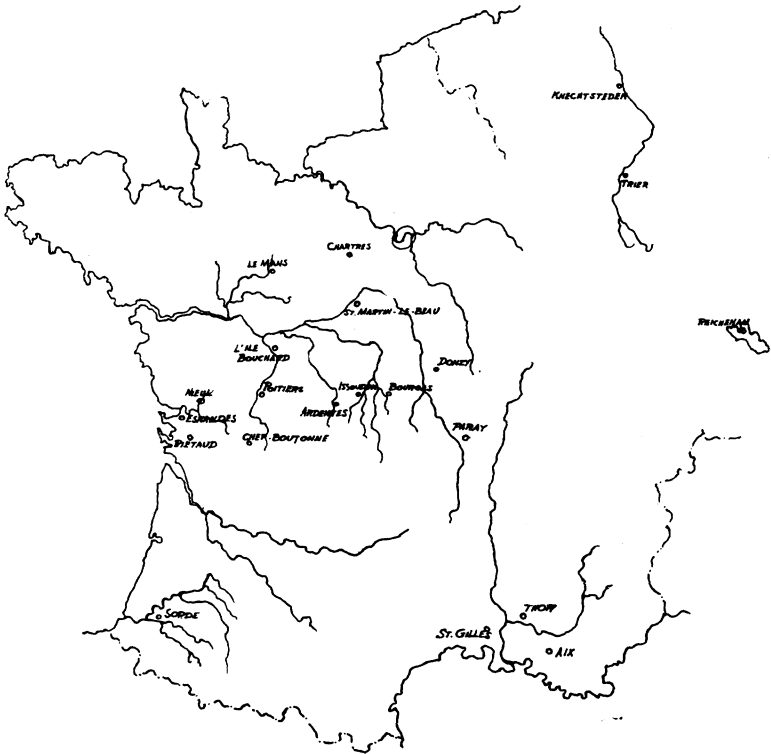


FIGURE 9.—MAP SHOWING THE DISTRIBUTION OF THE DOUBLE-AXE MOTIF.

period, shows that his conclusion was based on the slenderest of data. In view of what appears to me to be a very uncertain date, I have not tried to give this example its place in the evolution of the motif.

B. IN FRANCE

Our examples in France are much more diversified than those of Italy, where we have noted a facility and understanding in the

¹ Jubarù, *Sainte-Agnès*, p. 320, fig. 35.

early handling of the motif which suggests antecedents that we have lost, however certain it may be that the ultimate source from which Guglielmus drew the design was the illumination of manuscripts. This very skill of the early work inhibited any marked advance in the case of the Italian use of the double-axe. In France on the other hand the examples differ widely and it is difficult to trace a development, although it will be noticed (see map, Fig. 9) that the majority of the monuments which show the motif are to be found in the valley of the Loire. The order in which they are here presented is an arbitrary one which parallels the evolution already traced in the case of the illuminated manuscripts, but it will be found that this sequence does not conflict with such dates as can be determined with certainty.

At Aix, a colonnette in the cloister of the cathedral is covered with the "pin-wheel" design (Fig. 10). The carving is crude, with a tendency toward lop-sidedness at the top of the colonnette. The spaces between the flaps which distinguish French from Italian "pin-wheels" are here filled with many dots, a characteristic reminiscent of the manuscripts and not found in Italy.

The primitive character of the work, and the fact that only one colonnette is thus decorated indicate that this was an experiment which apparently was not regarded as successful. The crudity of the design accords with the date at the end of the

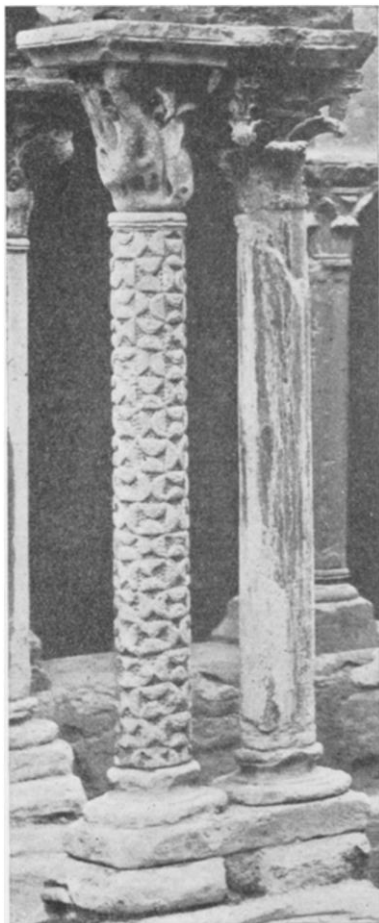


FIGURE 10.—COLUMN FROM THE CATHEDRAL CLOISTERS: AIX.

eleventh century which Revoil¹ and Lasteyrie² imply for the building of the cloister.

At Donzy, in the church of Notre-Dame-du-Pré, we find a torus of the archivolt of the west portal bearing a very good rendition of the "pin-wheel" motif.³ So great is the advance over the example of Aix that we should be inclined to date this example fully half a century later. The design is rendered in a splendid all-over pattern, with the lips of the flaps practically meeting. The dots in this instance are three in number.

The church of Saint-Martin-le-Beau⁴ has an archivolt moulding similar in most respects to that at Donzy. The two points of difference are that at Saint-Martin-le-Beau there are only single dots, and the flaps of the "pin-wheels" are decorated with a series of gouged concentric arcs which increase the flow of the design, approaching the ribbon handling which we have noted in the later manuscripts, and which reappears in its highest development at Saint-Gilles.

On the south portal of Bourges (Fig. 11) we find an example that looks like a developed Aix "pin-wheel." The lips do not meet and there are no dots, but otherwise there is great similarity between the two designs. There is also a small colonnette by the south door of Bourges containing the pattern, but this is rather more in the style of Donzy in omitting the several lines on the flaps. The sculptures of the south portal at Bourges are dated about 1160. At Paray⁵ there is an example much like that of Bourges, but the lips of the flaps are slightly further apart.

Somewhat earlier than the south portal of Bourges is the corresponding door of Le Mans.⁶ Here a colonnette shows the design in a form like that of the archivolt of Saint-Martin-le-Beau, with single dots, but with the lips slightly further apart. The "pin-wheel" effect is very strong in this example because of the thinning of the flaps and the accentuation of the points of intersection. This attenuation of the flaps is found in even greater degree at Chartres in the central portal of the west façade.⁷ The

¹ Revoil, *Arch. du Midi de la France*, II, p. 5.

² Lasteyrie, *L'Architecture religieuse en France à l'époque romane*, p. 411.

³ Lasteyrie, *op. cit.* p. 581.

⁴ Photograph, Princeton Art Museum; Baum, *Romanesque Architecture in France*, p. 142.

⁵ Dehio and Bezold, *Kirchliche Baukunst des Abendlandes*, III, pl. 299, 4.

⁶ Photograph, Princeton Art Museum.

⁷ Photograph, Princeton Art Museum.

single dots that here occur are done in relief instead of with the usual incision. A combination of the styles found at Chartres and at Donzy is seen in the small church at Semur-en-Brionnais.¹

Another example, with no features of especial note, is to be found in Notre-Dame at Issoudun.²

At Rétaud,³ which is dated *ca.* 1170, we find that the thinning of the flaps has advanced to such a point that even the "pin-wheel" seems to vanish, and the design, especially when seen from some distance, looks more like a network of fluttering ribbons. The most ribbon-like of all our examples is on a fascia moulding that runs along the paratid just south of the central portal on the west façade of Saint-Gilles.⁴ There is strong resemblance between the sculptured work here and

¹ Lasteyrie, *op. cit.* p. 588.

² *Congrès Archéologique de France*, 1873, p. 686.

³ Photograph, Princeton Art Museum. For the date, see Dangibeaud, *Bull. Arch.* 1910, p. 45.

⁴ Photograph, Princeton Art Museum.

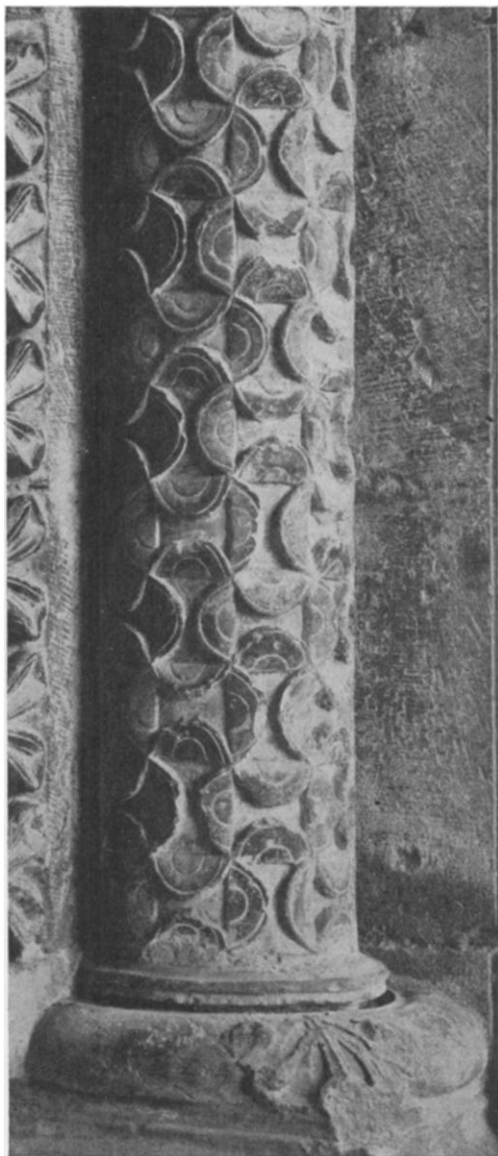


FIGURE 11.—COLUMN OF NORTH PORTAL: BOURGES.

the "pin-wheel" decoration of the Aachen Otto-manuscript. It is an interesting coincidence that this ribbon-like style should be found at Saint-Gilles, one of the latest of the French Romanesque examples in sculpture (dating from 1179 according to Lasteyrie), while the ribbon treatment of the Aachen manuscript affords us our last example of the all-over pattern among the manuscripts. After these two, the accentuation of the longitudinal axis leads in both cases to the reversion of the design toward a single row of double-axes. This was found to be true in the Trèves manu-



FIGURE 12.—NORTH PORTAL OF CHURCH: ARDENTES.

script (Fig. 6), and we find it true again in our next French example in stone, on the archivolt of the north side door of the church at Ardentes (Fig. 12), which curiously enough strongly resembles the Trèves manuscript in the style of its double-axe design.

The little church of Saint-Gilles at Ile-Bouchard has unfinished double-axes on the archivolt of the north side door, but they were undoubtedly meant to be completed like those on the caps of the choir pilasters of the church of Saint-Lazare in the same town.¹ The finished examples are real double-axes which no longer have the flaps peculiar to nearly all the French work.

¹ Photograph, Princeton Art Museum.

There remain to be mentioned four further examples of the double-axe or "pin-wheel" in the architectural sculpture of France. The first is found upon a pilaster cap to the south of the main portal of the church of Chef-Boutonne, which is decorated with a series of the flapped double-axes set parallel instead of end-to-end, and separated by vertical beads.¹ It is the only instance that I have found of this peculiar use of the motif. At Esnandes,² the lower wall of a blind arcade is covered with an all-over double-axe pattern. The work must be late, however, in view of the use of the pointed arch, and as it is done in the Italian rather than the French technique, it may well be assigned to some sculptor of the thirteenth century, either Italian, or a native acquainted with Italian methods and designs. A similar example seems to be found in the decoration of a pilaster in the choir of the church at Thor.³ Judging from the drawing of the design which is the only reproduction available, the characteristic French flaps are omitted.

Our last example in France of the sculptured "pin-wheel" is found upon the stole of one of the figures which occupy the embrasures of the side doors of the south portal of Chartres, and are dated in the middle of the thirteenth century.⁴ This example shows again the carefully squared design which we associate with the Carolingian phase of the motif, which may indicate that the realism with which the designs on the vestments of these figures are executed is due to the imitation of actual vestments of an earlier period. But the delicate leaves which here decorate the the axe-heads are reminiscent of those found at Ferrara.

The motif passed from the architectural sculpture of the Loire basin into the wall-painting of the same region. The priority of the sculptors may be seen from the greater variety which they impart to the motif, while the fresco-painters of the twelfth century use but one form, imitated from such examples as that of Bourges (Fig. 11), in which the flaps are decorated with concentric arcs. The earliest example of the French use of the motif in fresco may be that offered by Saint-Savin in Poitou, but here again the "pin-wheel" seems to be the deciding argument in a question of date. Merimée⁵ left open the date of the Romanesque

¹ Photograph, Princeton Art Museum.

² Photograph, Princeton Art Museum.

³ *Congrès Arch de France*, 1909, p. 287.

⁴ Didron, *Annales archéologiques*, VII, p. 150, no. 5.

⁵ *Peintures de l'Église de Saint-Savin*, p. 54.

frescoes of Saint-Savin, allowing a range from 1050 to 1150. E. Mâle¹ inclines to limit Merimée's date to the end of the eleventh century. Lasteyrie² does not believe them to be so ancient, and thinks that certain of the compositions belong to an "advanced epoch of the twelfth century." The appearance in the frescoes of the "pin-wheel" in the form used by the sculptors would indicate a date as late as the middle of the century. The other examples in frescoes of the twelfth century³ are all found in the Loire basin, save two toward the century's end in Burgundy and Savoy. The concentric arcs, which mark the derivation of the motif from the sculptured examples, disappear in the thirteenth century.

This completes the evolution of the double-axe motif in the Middle Ages. I have cited all the examples which I have been able to gather together and hope that the material thus presented may be useful to the student of Mediaeval Art. Other examples of the motif no doubt exist, but I think that if such turn up, they will hardly do more than modify very slightly the course of development as outlined. At any rate the study of the foregoing examples shows that throughout the Middle Ages the evolution of the motif was consistent and its extension circumscribed to an extent that can rarely be paralleled in the history of ornament.

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¹In Michel, *Hist. de l'Art chrét.* I, 2, p. 758.

²*Op. cit.* p. 550.

³French examples of the motif in wall-paintings:

1. Saint-Savin (Vienne); XII (?) century. Didot et Lafillée, *Peinture décorative en France*, ch. I, pl. I.
2. Montoire (Loire-et-Cher); XII century. *Op. cit.* pl. V, 7.
3. Poncé (Sarthe); XII century. *Op. cit.* ch. VI.
4. Saint-Desiré (Allier); XII century. *Op. cit.* ch. VIII, pl. VIII, 10.
5. Saint-Martin de Laval (Mayenne); XII century. *Op. cit.* ch. VIII.
6. Sainte-Chef (Isère); end of XII century. *Op. cit.* pl. IX, 1.
7. Saint-Philibert de Tournus (Saône et Loire); end of XII century. *Op. cit.* pl. XVII, 3.
8. Saint-Ours de Loches (Indre et Loire); XIII century. *Op. cit.* pl. XIX, 13.
9. Saint-Michel d'Aiguilhe, near Le Puy (Haute-Loire); XIII century. *Op. cit.* pl. XXIII, 5.
10. Chapel of Saint-Crépin, Evron (Mayenne); XIII century. *Op. cit.* pl. XXVI, 2, 3.
11. Autry (Ardennes); XIII-XIV century. *Op. cit.* pl. XXXVIII, 15.

NOTE.

Mr. O'Connor's paper is intentionally objective, and for this reason no doubt he has refrained from certain generalizations which are in some cases suggested, in others imposed, by the interesting evolution which he has traced. They are nevertheless of such interest to students of Mediaeval Art that I have taken the liberty of adding them in the form of this note.

The first point of a general nature that one notices in reviewing the history of the "pin-wheel" is the curiously limited area over which its evolution extends. Motifs of ornament seldom behave in so circumspect a fashion and the negative aspects of the extension of the motif are worth noting. Thus it appears in no school of Carolingian illumination except the earliest one,—the Ada-group,—and thereafter confines itself to the German schools which have already been suspected of drawing largely from the Ada-manuscripts. It also duly appears in Belgian work of the eleventh century, thus confirming the indications of Rhenish influence on Belgian illumination which may be gathered from other sources. It does *not* appear in the Franco-Saxon manuscripts, nor in their descendants of Northern France, nor in the English schools, which brings into sharper relief the separation in origin and development of the French and English schools of illumination from those of the Rhine.

Again, its appearance and extension in the architectural sculpture of France in the twelfth century is marked by a similar circumscription of area. Mr. O'Connor's map will make this clear to any student of the French Romanesque. No examples have been noted in Normandy or the Northern and Eastern provinces, nor in England, and the motif is similarly absent from Languedoc and Perigord. The extension of the ornament seems thus to have been confined, save for the few examples found in Provence, to the valley of the Loire, with excursions into the southern outposts of Ile-de-France, and into the northern ones of Saintonge and Poitou.

Aside from these negative indications, we may draw certain positive inferences from the evolution of the motif which are of even greater interest. In the first place, the late Roman history of the motif has shown that it was popular in mosaics. The squaring of the design which is characteristic of these late mosaics reappears when the motif occurs in the Ada-manuscripts, and the conclusion is imposed that the illuminators borrowed the motif

from the mosaics or similar late Roman sources, which conclusion should exert a qualifying effect on the tendency manifest of late years to ascribe the ornament of the Ada-group to Oriental sources *en bloc*.

Lastly, there is the curious unheralded emergence of the motif in Lombard sculpture. It could not have been borrowed from France because the Italians used it first and in a different form. The only school which was commonly using the motif in the eleventh century, the period immediately preceding its appearance in Guglielmus' work, was the Rhenish school of manuscript illumination deriving its style from the "school of Reichenau" of the Ottonian period, which in turn, as Mr. O'Connor has shown, borrowed the motif from the Carolingian Ada-manuscripts. Rhenish illumination is thus indicated as the source from which Guglielmus got his "pin-wheels," and this seems to me to be a very natural source, in view of the fact that there is a distinct affinity between the figure-style of the Rhenish manuscripts and that which Guglielmus developed into such crude power in the reliefs at Modena. The Rhenish manuscripts in fact are the *only* monuments of the period preceding the rise of the Lombard style that afford a reasonable source for the Lombard figures and at the same time include the tell-tale "pin-wheel" in their repertoire of ornament. It seems to me that Mr. O'Connor's paper goes far toward clearing up the mystery of the origin of the Lombard style; it would seem that in its connection with Germany we have simply another example of that close relation of Italy with the Rhine which is a commonplace of mediaeval history.

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